

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, IN, AF, PK

SUBJECT: SOME MEA OBSERVATIONS ON AFGHANISTAN

AND INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY: THE MEA HAS EXPRESSED CONCERN TO US ABOUT THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN AND ONCE AGAIN COUNSELLED A HANDS OFF APPROACH BY OUTSIDERS. REGARDING INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS, THE MEA HAS BEEN KEPT BUSY ANSWERING A SPATE OF ANTI-GOP QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A CALL BY EMBOFFS AUGUST 21, I.P. SINGH, MEA JOINT

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SECRETARY FOR PAKISTAN IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN, DESCRIBED THE CURRENT SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AS VERY SERIOUS AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT ALL THOSE INTERESTED IN THE PEACE AND STABILITY OF THE REGION, "ESPECIALLY OUR SOVIET FRIENDS" WILL DO NOTHING TO EXACERBATE THE SITUATION. AS FOR RECENT EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN, SINGH SAID THERE WERE REPORTS THAT MAJOR WATANJAR HAS ALSO BEEN ARRESTED AND UNCONFIRMED RUMORS THAT QADER HAD

BEEN EXECUTED. SINGH SAID FIGHTING WAS GOING ON IN SOME PROVINCES BUT NOT IN KABUL. HE DESCRIBED THE LATEST INCIDENT AS APPARENTLY ANOTHER STAGE IN THE CIVILIAN-MILITARY STRUGGLE WITHIN THE RULING PARTY BUT NOTED THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE MILITARY WERE PROBABLY UNINVOLVED.

2. ASKED HIS ASSESSMENT OF TARAKI'S RECENT PUBLIC REMARKS ABOUT RESISTING OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE, SINGH SAID THAT SUCH REFERENCES IN THE PAST FEW DAYS WERE TO THE CHINESE, NOT TO THE PAKISTANIS WHO WERE THE OBJECTS OF EARLIER EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN. WHEN ASKED WHAT CAPABILITIES THE CHINESE MIGHT HAVE TO CAUSE DIFFICULTIES FOR THE TARAKI REGIME, SINGH DID NOT RESPOND DIRECTLY. INSTEAD, HE ASSERTED THAT THE CHINESE WERE EXCESSIVELY CONCERNED ABOUT AFGHANISTAN. HE FURTHER SAID THAT THE INDIANS HAD REPORTS, BUT NO CONFIRMATION, THAT THE PRC HAS CHIDED THE PAKISTANIS FOR NOT BEING CONCERNED ENOUGH IN THEIR REACTION TO AFGHAN EVENTS. IN TURN, THE PAKISTANIS ALLEGEDLY TOLD THE CHINESE THAT THEY DID NOT WANT TO BE DRAWN INTO A SINO-SOVIET QUARREL OVER AFGHANISTAN AND DID NOT WANT TO DO ANYTHING TO MAKE AFGHAN-PAKISTAN RELATIONS WORSE. SINGH REFERRED TO THE "STATESMANLIKE" WAY IN WHICH THE PAKISTANIS HANDLED THE STRAYED AIRCRAFT INCIDENT AS AN EXAMPLE OF THEIR DESIRE TO CAUSE NO PROBLEMS WITH AFGHANISTAN.

3. SINGH CONCLUDED HIS REMARKS ABOUT AFGHANISTAN BY AGAIN
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REPEATING THAT ANY OUTSIDE EFFORTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION WOULD BE DANGEROUS AND ONLY LEAD TO COUNTERACTION. INDIA HAD VERY LITTLE INFLUENCE TO WIELD IN THE SITUATION. THE COUNTRY WITH INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN WAS THE SOVIET UNION, BUT, HE ADDED, "AFGHANISTAN IS NOT CZECHOSLOVAKIA."

4. PAKISTAN: ASKED ABOUT THE RECENT SPATE OF PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS CRITICAL OF PAKISTAN, SINGH SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN YEARS SINCE THE MINISTRY HAS HAD TO FIELD SO MANY QUESTIONS. HE ATTRIBUTED THE ANTAGONISTIC QUESTIONING TO DOMESTIC POLITICS AND NOTED THAT MOST COULD BE ANSWERED DIRECTLY. FOR INSTANCE, THE MINISTRY HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY DENYING THAT THERE IS ANY SIGNIFICANT PAKISTANI INFILTRATION INTO KASHMIR OR THAT THERE IS A PAK COMMANDO BUILDUP ON THE BORDER. SINGH COMPLAINED, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS MORE DIFFICULT TO ANSWER ACCUSATIONS THAT PAKISTAN IS REVIVING KASHMIR AND COMMUNAL ISSUES. SPECIFICALLY, SINGH REFERRED TO GENERAL ZIA'S REPORTED REMARKS AT THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE IN KARACHI IN WHICH HE EQUATED PALESTINE AND KASHMIR AND TO ANOTHER REPORT THAT AT A CONFERENCE IN LONDON A.K. BROHI HAD IMPLIED THAT THE MUSLIMS IN INDIA HAD PROBLEMS SIMILAR TO THOSE IN THE PHILIPPINES AND BURMA. WHEN THE INDIANS COMPLAINED ABOUT THESE REPORTS,

SINGH SAID, ALL THEY RECEIVED WERE "LAME EXCUSES." ACCORDING TO SINGH, FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE HAD POINTEDLY ASKED THE PAK AMBASSADOR IF THE GOP THOUGHT THAT THE ANSWER TO KASHMIR COULD BE FOUND AT A CONFERENCE OF MULLAHS. SINGH SAID THAT THE INDIANS UNDERSTOOD THE DOMESTIC IMPERATIVES BEHIND SUCH PAKISTANI ALLUSIONS, BUT HE SAID THE PAKISTANIS WERE NOT SUFFICIENTLY SENSITIVE TO THE IMPACT OF SUCH REMARKS IN INDIA.

5. COMMENT: SINGH DESCRIBED THE RECENT EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN AS AN INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGAIN REPEATED THE INDIAN POSITION THAT NO PRECIPITOUS ACTION BE TAKEN BY OUTSIDE FORCES THAT MIGHT WORSEN THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN. HOWEVER, SINGH SEEMED SOMEWHAT MORE POINTED IN HIS REFERENCES TO SOVIET INFLUENCE AND PERHAPS MORE CONCERNED THAN THE MEA HAS

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INDICATED PREVIOUSLY ABOUT SOVIET RESPONSES SHOULD FURTHER TROUBLE DEVELOP. IT IS ALSO SOMETHING OF A SWITCH FOR THE MEA TO PUT FORWARD THE VIEW THAT ANYONE COULD BE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT AFGHANISTAN THAN THE PAKISTANIS. SINGH AVOIDED PROVIDING ANY EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HIS VIEW THAT THE TARAKI REGIME IS CONCERNED ABOUT CHINESE MACHINATIONS, AND WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN KABUL'S ASSESSMENT OF WHAT MIGHT HAVE PROMPTED HIS REMARK.

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